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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 127189

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: XA, SA, US, PFOR

SUBJECT:SAUDI DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN AFRICA

REF: JIDDA 3341

1. DEPARTMENT WELCOMES SAUDI DECISION TO PROMOTE THEIR INTERESTS MORE ACTIVELY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND BELIEVES THAT THEY COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION. SAUDI INTENTION TO ESTABLISH STRONG DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN NIGERIA AND SENEGAL IS STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION. DEPARTMENT CONCURS IN EMBASSY VIEW THAT LIST OF AFRICAN REGIMES GRADED BY COMMITMENT TO FREE ENTERPRISE AND ANTI-COMMUNISM WOULD POSE PROBLEM FOR US. WE HAVE HOWEVER A NUMBER OF SUGGESTIONS RE POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FOR SAUDI ATTENTION IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA. SHOULD SAUDIS BE WILLING EXPAND GEOGRAPHIC LIMITS OF THEIR OPERATION, SEVERAL STATES IN SOUTHERN AND

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EAST AFRICA ALSO MAY MERIT CONSIDERATION.

2. FYI. WHILE WE WELCOME INCREASED SAUDI INTEREST IN AFRICA, WE WILL WANT TO MONITOR CAREFULLY THE TIMING AND DEGREE OF US INVOLVEMENT IN SAUDI ACTIVITY IN AFRICA IN ORDER AVOID SITUATIONS IN WHICH WE WOULD BE WORKING AT CROSS PURPOSES. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE OF MODERATE TENDENCIES IN AFRICA WHICH WE ENCOURAGE -- BUT SAUDIS WOULD NOT -- IS

ILLINGNESS TO OPPOSE ANTI-ISRAELI MOVES WHICH ARABS MOUNT IN VARIETY OF FORUMS. ALSO, WHERE AND WHEN APPROPRIATE WE ENCOURAGE AFRICANS TO RENEW THEIR TIES WITH ISRAEL. THESE INTERESTS COULD BE AWKWARDLY CONFLICTING IN SPECIFIC INSTANCES IF NOT WATCHED CAREFULLY. END FYI.

3. RE WEST AFRICA, SAUDI DESIRE TO OPEN MISSIONS IN LAGOS AND DAKAR AS BASIS FOR ACTIVITY IN ENTIRE WEST AFRICA REGION MAKES GOOD SENSE. NIGERIA FAILS TO MEET SAUDI CRITERIA IN SOME WAYS AND IN ANY EVENT HAS NO NEED FOR OUTSIDE AID, BUT AS MOST INFLUENTIAL AND POWERFUL COUNTRY IN REGION, REPRESENTATION THERE IS LOGICAL POLITICAL MOVE. IN ADDITION LARGEST SINGLE SEGMENT (CA. 50) OF POPULATION IS MOSLEM. IN ADDITION TO SENEGAL, WEST AFRICAN STATES WHICH HAVE SHOWN STRONGEST COMMITMENT TO FREE ENTERPRISE AND HAVE BEEN STAUNCH FRIENDS OF WEST HAVE BEEN IVORY COAST AND LIBERIA. BOTH THESE STATES ACTUALLY PROMOTE FOREIGN PRIVATE INVESTMENT, AND HAVE BASED THEIR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE BOTH HAVE ALSO BEEN RELIABLE FRIENDS OF WESTERN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. THEIR VOTING RECORD IN THE UN AND THEIR BEHAVIOR IN OAU COUNCILS HAVE SHOWN STRONG SUPPORT FOR MODERATE POSITIONS.

4. SAUDIS MAY ALSO WISH CONSIDER PARTICIPATION IN SAHEL DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT PROGRAM OUTLINED BY THE SECRETARY IN HIS MAY 1 SPEECH AT DAKAR. THIS PROPOSAL ASPIRES TO THE GOAL OF SELF SUFFICIENCY FOR SIX DROUGHT-STRICKEN SAHEL COUNTRIES -- SENEGAL, MALI, UPPER VOLTA, NIGER, CHAD AND MAURITANIA. THIS MULTI-DONOR EFFORT WILL AUGMENT THE WESTERN PRESENCE IN THE REGION AND COULD INFLUENCE

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THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENTS THERE.

WE WOULD ALSO NOTE, IN THIS GENERAL AREA, THAT SENEGAL, UPPER VOLTA, NIGER, CHAD, TOGO AND, TO CERTAIN EXTENT, MOSLEM MAURITANIA ARE FRIENDLY TO WEST. BOTH CHAD AND NIGER ARE POOR COUNTRIES, WITH CONSERVATIVE MILITARY GOVERNMENTS AND ISLAMIC POPULATIONS. BOTH WOULD APPRECIATE SAUDI SUPPORT IN THE FACE OF PRESSURE FROM

THEIR NEIGHBOR, LIBYA.

5. IN CENTRAL AFRICA WE WOULD SUGGEST SAUDI ATTENTION TO ZAIRE, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, ZAMBIA AND CAMEROON. ZAIRE IS THE LARGEST AFRICAN COUNTRY IN AREA AND THE THIRD LARGEST IN POPULATION. ZAIRE POSSESSES SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IS ALREADY A MAJOR SUPPLIER OF AN IMPORTANT RAW MATERIAL, COPPER. CONCEIVABLY IT COULD OFFER INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO

PRIVATE SAUDI CAPITAL. THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT IS STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ATTEMPTS TO PLAY A PROMINENT AND MODERATE ROLE IN THIRD WORLD POLITICS. GOZ RELATIONS WITH THE USG ARE VERY CLOSE AND THE USG HAS, SINCE ZAIRIAN INDEPENDENCE IN 1960, PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ZAIRIAN DEVELOPMENT. ZAIRE IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, STEMMING PARTIALLY FROM THE ADVERSE PRICE TRENDS FOR ITS MAJOR EXPORTS, AND WOULD MOST LIKELY BE HIGHLY RECEPTIVE TO THE TYPE OF APPROACH THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA IS CONTEMPLATING.

6. ZAMBIA LIKE ZAIRE FACES SERIOUS SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF STILL DEPRESSED WORLD PRICE FOR MAJOR EXPORT, COPPER. ZAMBIAN LEADER KAUNDA IS STaunchLY ANTI-COMMUNIST BUT IS COMMITTED IN PRINCIPLE TO CREATION OF A SOCIALIST ECONOMY. HOWEVER, LARGE MULTI-NATIONAL FIRMS DO OPERATE IN ZAMBIA ESPECIALLY IN THE COPPER INDUSTRY.

7. CAMEROON HAS LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. COUNTRY HAS LARGE ISLAMIC POPULATION LED BY CONSERVATIVE MOSLEM PRESIDENT AHIDJO. THE ECONOMY IS GROWING ALBEIT SLOWLY, AND WOULD BENEFIT FROM SAUDI CONTRIBUTION.
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8. THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC HAS A CONSERVATIVE NATIONALIST REGIME WHICH HAS STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE WEST, ESPECIALLY IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. CAR IS A VERY POOR COUNTRY WHICH WOULD WELCOME SAUDI SUPPORT TO BOLSTER ITS BASIC ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE.

9. ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA TWO SMALL INDEPENDENT BLACK KINGDOMS LED BY CONSERVATIVE RULERS NEED SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, AS WELL AS FROM RADICAL REGIME IN MOZAMBIQUE. THESE SMALL STATES, IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND, COULD MAKE GOOD USE OF INFUSION OF SAUDI CAPITAL. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN CASE OF SWAZILAND, WHICH HAS AN EXPANDING SECTOR IN ITS ECONOMY. THESE TWO STATES ARE OUTSIDE GEOGRAPHICAL

AREAS OF INTEREST INDICATED BY SAUDIS. HOWEVER, THEY MEET OTHER CRITERIA INDICATED REFTTEL, I.E. COMMITMENT TO FREE WORLD, FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM AND OPPOSITION TO COMMUNISM. STILL ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WOULD BE BOTSWANA WHICH IS HOWEVER SOMEWHAT LESS PRO-WESTERN THAN LESOTHO OR SWAZILAND. FINALLY, IN EAST AFRICA, KENYA WOULD APPEAR TO MEET SAUDIS CRITERIA (FREE ENTERPRISE, PRO-WESTERN) AND IS A COUNTRY THE UNITED STATES IS GIVING INCREASING ATTENTION TO FOR STRATEGIC AND OTHER REASONS.

,0. UNCLASSIFIED DATA -- BACKGROUND NOTES AND ECONOMIC TRENDS REPORTS -- ON COUNTRIES MENTIONED BEING POUCHED. ROBINSON

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